

Notes on Loricata
16. Chitons from the Gulf of Gabès, Tunisia¹

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A large collection of Loricata from six localities in the Gulf of Gabès, Tunisia, appeared to contain eleven species, of which three new for the country and for North Africa.

Key words: Loricata/Polyplacophora, distribution, Tunisia, Mediterranean.

INTRODUCTION

In 1982 Dr. Philippe Bouchet (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Laboratoire de Malacologie, Paris) and Dr. Anders Warén (then at the Department of Zoology, University of Göteborg, now at the Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden) collected a lot of chitons in six habitats, numbered I-VI, in the Gulf of Gabès, Tunisia. Altogether hundreds of specimens were procured, many of them juveniles or small adults, belonging to eleven species, some of them reported from Tunisia for the first time. All specimens are preserved in the Paris museum. They are enumerated here in systematic order. The habitats are the following:

- I Canal d'Adjim, Isle of Djerba, 10-32 m, by diving;
- II E. of Houmt Souk, Isle of Djerba, intertidal rocks;
- III Off Houmt Souk, Isle of Djerba, 6-8 m, by diving;
- IV Borj Djillidj, Isle of Djerba, in *Posidonia* meadows, 0-8 m, by diving;
- V NW. of the Sea of Bou Grara, 10-15 m, by diving;
- VI Bou Grara, littoral.

SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

Order Neoloricata
Suborder Lepidopleurina
Family Leptochitonidae

Leptochiton cancellatus (Sowerby, 1840)

I: 12 specimens; IV: 5; VI: 2.

Leptochiton bedullii Dell'Angelo & Palazzi, 1986.

IV: 1.

Suborder Ischnochitonina
Family Ischnochitonidae
Subfamily Callochitoninae

Callochiton septemvalvis (Montagu, 1803) subsp. *euplaeae* (O.G. Costa, 1829)

II: 3; V: 1.

¹ Notes on Loricata 15, vide Basteria 51: 21-23, 1987.

Subfamily Lepidochitoninae

Lepidochitona cinerea (Linnaeus, 1767)

II: 12.

Lepidochitona corrugata (Reeve, 1848)

II: many; IV: 10.

Lepidochitona furtiva (di Monterosato, 1879)

I: 2; III: 2; IV: many; VI: 1.

Lepidochitona monterosatoi Kaas & Van Belle, 1981

I: 4; III: 2; IV: many; VI: 1.

Subfamily Ischnochitoninae

Ischnochiton rissoi (Payraudeau, 1826)

IV: many; VI: 1.

Family Chitonidae

Subfamily Chitoninae

Chiton (Rhyssoplax) olivaceus Spengler, 1797

I: 5; II: 1; III: 2; IV: many; VI: 1.

Chiton (Rhyssoplax) corallinus (Risso, 1826)

I: many; II: many; III: many.

Suborder Acanthochitonina

Family Acanthochitonidae

Subfamily Acanthochitoninae

Acanthochitona fascicularis (Linnaeus, 1767)

I: 5; III: 4; IV: many; VI: 1.

OBSERVATIONS

Most striking of the distribution of chitons in the present area is the absence of species common in northern and western parts of the Mediterranean, viz., *Lepidopleurus cajetanus* (Poli, 1791), *Leptochiton algesirensis* (Capellini, 1859) and *Acanthochitona crinita* (Pennant, 1777). The absence of the last species only confirms the conclusion that it does not occur on the northern coast of Africa.

The records of *Leptochiton bedullii*, *Lepidochitona furtiva* and *L. monterosatoi* are important range extensions of these species. So far, these three species were only known to occur in the NW. Mediterranean; therefore all are new to the North African coast.